

CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION  
AND  
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PLAN**

For

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)

Emergency Solutions Grant Funds (ESG)

Housing Opportunities for People with Aids (HOPWA)

Section 108 Loan Guarantees

Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation  
City of Virginia Beach, Virginia

Amended as Part of the Amendment Process for the initiation of the  
Emergency Solutions Grant  
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This plan is developed, adopted and amended by:

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To obtain copies of this plan, the City's 5-Year Consolidated Strategy and Plan, the Annual Funding Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance Report, or any document referred to in this plan, please contact Bill Doré at 757-385-5736.

## Applicability

This plan applies to activities funded in whole or part by the following Federal programs:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)  
Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)  
Emergency Solutions Grant Funds (ESG)  
Housing Opportunities for People with Aids (HOPWA)  
Section 108 Guaranteed Loan Funds

## Definitions

The term "HUD" means the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The term "Consolidated Plan" means the Consolidated Strategy and Plan.

The term "CDBG" means the Community Development Block Grant Program

The term "HOME" means the HOME Investment Partnership Program

The term "ESG" means the Emergency Solutions Grant.

The term "HOPWA" means the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS Program

The term "Federal funds" means funds received by the City of Virginia Beach under any or all of the above listed programs/

The term "DHNP" means Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation, City of Virginia Beach.

The term "low and moderate income persons" means those persons having an annual gross family income not exceeding 80% of the citywide median household income as determined by HUD. This term is inclusive of people considered to be very low income, with incomes below 60% of median household income, and people considered to be extremely low income, with incomes below 30% of that amount.

The term "Annual Funding Plan" means the annual application submitted to HUD which describes the City's planned use of Federal funds for the program year beginning on July 1 of each year.

The term "CAPER" means the annual performance report on the City's use of Federal funds.

"City-wide" means all areas within the boundaries of the City of Virginia Beach.

### Purposes

The purpose of this plan is to meet the federal requirements for citizen participation and community consultation as described in 24 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations), part 91, subpart B.

Further, in accordance with 24 CFR 576, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program, the City must consult with the Continuum of Care in determining how to allocate its ESG grant for eligible activities; in developing the performance standards for, and evaluating the outcomes of, projects and activities assisted by ESG funds; and in developing funding policies, and procedures for the operation and administration of the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS).

In fulfilling both of these purposes, we will facilitate detailed consultation with agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, social services and fair housing services (including those that focus their services on children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, and agencies that address the needs of homeless persons, particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth and persons at-risk of becoming homeless). In the area of homelessness, we will consult specifically with the following:

1. The Continuum of Care that serves the City of Virginia Beach;
2. Public and private agencies that address housing, health, social service, victim services, employment, or education needs of low-income individuals and families; homeless individuals and families, including homeless veterans; youth; and/or other persons with special needs;
3. Publicly funded institutions and systems of care that may discharge persons into homelessness (such as healthcare facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and correction programs and institutions); and
4. Business and civic leaders.

By fulfilling these requirements, we will provide for and encourage citizen's participation in the development of:

- Any consolidated plan,
- Any substantial amendment,
- The annual performance report,
- Any Section 108 Loan Guarantee Application, and
- Any specific action required for a Request for a Release of Funds

## Goals

Our plan is designed especially to encourage participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low-and moderate-income neighborhoods. This plan encourages all citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities to participate. To the extent practical, accommodations for non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities will be made to encourage their participation.

We will seek out and encourage engagement with local and regional institutions, the Continuum of Care and other organizations (including businesses, developers, non-profit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith-based organization) in the process of developing the consolidated plan.

We will encourage the residents living in assisted housing to participate in the process of developing and implementing the consolidated plan. Since the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation (DHNP) is the Public Housing Agency for the City of Virginia Beach, we provide information about the consolidated plan activities related to the developments in the plan and those in surrounding communities so that the PHA can make this information available at the annual public hearing for the PHA Plan.

We continually explore and utilize alternative public involvement techniques and qualitative ways to measure efforts that encourage citizen participation in a shared vision for change in communities and neighborhoods, the review of program performance, the use of focus groups and the Internet.

- We use the Internet to distribute our message to organizations and individuals that have asked to receive our quarterly information publication, Connections;
- We utilize our city's electronic "City Page" to disburse information;
- We have created electronic surveys for citizens to respond to via the Internet;
- We created the BEACH Community Partnership to serve as a community-based organization that focuses on ending homelessness in our city. This planning organization is a sounding board for our consolidated plan activities specifically related to homelessness.

The encouragement of citizen input and feedback is intended to be an aid to the planning, implementation and evaluation of community development and housing activities carried out under these programs in the City of Virginia Beach. Final disposition concerning the findings and contents of the City's Annual Funding Plan

remains the sole responsibility and authority of the City government.

### Implementation

#### 1. Ongoing Citizen Involvement and Consultation Actions

Staff of the Department of Housing currently participate, and as defined by this plan, will continue to participate in many ongoing activities where agencies, interested parties and citizens have an ongoing opportunity to provide input on housing and community development needs. This ongoing dialogue with stakeholders will continue and will serve to continually keep us in touch with the needs and perceptions of the community. These activities are listed below:

- A. Staff from the Code Enforcement division attends monthly meetings of the “Police Precinct Citizen Advisory Committees”. There are four of these committees in the City corresponding with each of the four Police precincts. Citizens and officers of the Committees have the opportunity to raise issues and bring up concerns to staff of the Department of Housing and other city agencies.
- B. Staff coordinates and facilitate a monthly meeting of the “Virginia Beach Homeless Advocacy and Resource Partnership” (VBHARP). All providers of services to the homeless, as well as all those interested in affordable housing, are invited to attend these meetings. These meetings have been and will continue to be used to obtain input from attendees on housing, homeless and community development issues.
- C. Staff meets regularly with members of the Greater Hampton Roads HIV Health Services Planning Council and the Needs Assessment & Comprehensive Planning Committee of that organization regarding issues relating to the use of HOPWA funds in conjunction with Ryan White funds and the needs of people with HIV/AIDS.
- D. Staff coordinates and attends regular meetings of the Section 8 Resident Advisory Board, required under Section 8 regulations.
- E. Staff attends monthly board meetings of the Virginia Beach Community Development Corporation (VBCDC) and Southeast Virginia Housing Corporation (SVHC). Both of these boards are made up of community representatives interested in the provision of affordable housing. In addition, the board of directors of the Southeast Virginia Housing Corporation includes representatives of low-income City neighborhoods.

- F. Staff attends civic league meetings and consults regularly with residents of areas where ongoing neighborhood improvement efforts are occurring.
- G. Staff will annually attend a meeting of the Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission in order to obtain their input on housing and community development needs.
- H. Staff will annually consult with members of the Tidewater Multi-Family Housing Council of the Tidewater Builders Association (representing primarily apartment managers); and the Tidewater Association of Realtors/Property Management Committee.
- I. Staff will consult at least annually with staff from the City's Department of Human Services in order to identify community needs and coordinate services.
- J. Staff meets regularly with representatives of housing agencies of neighboring localities, as part of the Hampton Roads Housing Coalition.
- K. Staff will consult at least annually with the membership of the Virginia Beach Council of Civic Organizations (CCO) regarding housing and community development needs.
- L. Staff regularly attends meetings of Hope in the Upper Room, a self-help group of currently homeless individuals to provide information about city activities and hear concerns from our homeless citizens.
- M. Staff attends monthly meetings of the BEACH Community Partnership as well as other committee meetings relative to the areas of homelessness.
- N. Staff coordinate the meetings and work of VBHARP, the continuum-of-care agency for Virginia Beach, and will insure that the members of VBHARP are consulted in regard to all applicable issues.

## 2. Specific Public Hearings to be Held and Notices to Be Published

Announcements of all public hearings as well as required notices will be published in the local newspaper of general circulation, the Virginian Pilot. Notices announcing hearings will be published at least three days prior to the hearing.

### A. Program Planning Public Hearing and Notice

In the fall of each year, a program planning public hearing will be held to obtain citizen input on housing and community development needs including performance of housing and community development and the use of guaranteed loan funds. This hearing will be held in conjunction with the annual Consolidated Plan update (the Annual Action Plan) and Performance Reporting process (the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, or CAPER). All comments made at the hearing or received in writing will be considered in the development of the following year's Annual Action Plan.

**B. Review of Proposed Annual Funding Plan - Public Hearing and Notice**

In April of each year, a public hearing will be held to provide citizens the opportunity to comment on the proposed Annual Action Plan for the following program year including use of guaranteed loan funds. Comments received during this hearing will be considered prior to submission of the Annual Action Plan in mid-May.

**C. Review of Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report**

In September, a public notice will be placed regarding the availability of this report and inviting citizen comments on this document. Citizen comments on it will be considered prior to its submission to HUD in end of September. The comment period for performance reports shall be 15 days.

**F. Substantial Changes in the Proposed Use of Funds**

Whenever the City proposes to make a substantial change\* in the uses of CDBG funds\*\*, a public notice will be published, to advise the public of the proposed change. No public hearing is required to be held. Comments on the proposed change will be accepted prior to final action on the proposed change. The comment period for a substantial change shall be 30 days.

\*A substantial change is defined as a change in the use of funds that affects more than 10% of the annual funding of the CDBG program for that program year, or utilizes funds to establish a new program.

\*\*This requirement applies only to CDBG funds. However, it is the intent of the City to fully inform citizens of all substantial changes in the use of Federal funds.



### 3. General Policies and Procedures

- A. The policy of the department is to assist those citizens who wish to comment on the use of Federal funds to do so. Therefore, technical assistance including the provision of requested information, explanation, and referral will be provided whenever possible.
- B. Accessibility of notices: Whenever practicable, public notices will be published online on the department's web site in order to facilitate access by the visually handicapped.
- C. Notices regarding all hearings or meetings will be placed in a newspaper of general circulation at least seven (7) days before such meeting. These notices may contain the following information, depending on the reason the public hearing is being held:
  - 1. Information regarding available CDBG, Guaranteed Loan, HOME, HOPWA and ESG funding and any program income utilized.
  - 2. The range of activities that may be carried out with Federal funds
  - 3. The estimated amount of each type of Federal funds to be used for activities that will benefit low, very low and extremely low income persons;
  - 4. The proposed activities that will result in displacement and the City's plans for minimizing displacement;
  - 5. Additional information as required by regulation.
- D. Citizen comments will be accepted in person, in writing, or via fax or e-mail.
- E. Hearings will be conducted in accordance with Departmental Public Hearing Procedures
- F. Copies of the following documents will be available to the public at the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation and all public libraries: Annual Funding Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), Policy to Minimize Displacement, Citizen Participation Plan, and the Consolidated Strategy and Plan.

### 4. Citizen Complaint Procedures

- A. Should any citizen have a complaint or grievance (other than a routine inquiry or request for assistance) regarding the planning or implementation of the City's CDBG, HOME, HOPWA or ESG Program, it will be requested that this complaint be put in writing and submitted to the

Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation.

- B. A written response to written complaints submitted to the City will be provided within fifteen (15) working days from the receipt of the letter of complaint by the City in all instances where it is practicable.

## 5. Relocation and Displacement Policy

The City of Virginia Beach has adopted Relocation and Displacement Policy, and an Optional Relocation Plan for Persons Displaced due to living in unsafe housing. These plans are published as part of the City's Annual Funding Plan, and a copy may be obtained using the contact information at the front of this document.

## 6. Conclusion

This Plan is intended to set forth the general guidelines and procedures for encouraging citizen participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the City's federally funded housing and community development programs. This Plan is also designed to facilitate the participation of low, very low, and extremely low income persons and their representatives at both the citywide and neighborhood levels. The procedures to encourage citizen participation set forth in this Plan should in no way be construed as limiting the participation of citizens in these programs to the activities described in the Plan. It is the policy of the City to encourage innovative and constructive input by its citizens to improve the performance of its programs. The success of these programs is dependent upon the mutual support and close cooperation between the City and its citizens in the pursuit of the program objectives.

# **EXHIBIT A – Public Hearing Procedures**

## **PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES**

The following procedures apply to the scheduled public hearings referenced in this. These procedures are designed to assist staff in conducting the public hearing in both an open and organized manner.

1. Information on the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation programs and expenditures will be available at a table located at the entrance to the hearing room. All persons attending the hearing will be asked to sign-in.
2. The Department of Housing representative will open the hearing the recognize those who wish to speak.
3. If present, members of City Council will be recognized and will be allowed to testify first if they plan to speak.
4. All speakers will be asked to give their name, address and the organization (if appropriate) they represent.
5. Time allotted for speakers will be determined by the number of speakers and the time allocated for the meeting.
6. No questions or interchange between speakers and persons in the audience will be permitted in order to enable speakers to speak freely and without interruption.
7. The public hearing will be taped. A summary of the speakers, their testimony, as well as any written comments received by the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation will be placed in the document to which the comments apply.
8. Since the primary language of the City's low, very low and extremely low income residents is English, a significant number of non-English speaking residents are not expected to participate in CDBG Program public hearings. Consequently, all notices of public hearings and any basic program information will be communicated in English. Should a non-English speaking person experience difficulty in participating in the public hearing process, every attempt will be made to assist him/her on an individual basis to ensure meaningful access to program information.
9. Public hearings will be held in locations that are accessible to the handicapped and low and moderate income persons.

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